

Ezekiel 15 - Parable of the Vine

I. Imminent judgment upon Judah (Ezek 1:1—24:27)

- (2) Prophecies of coming judgment against Judah and Jerusalem (Ezek 4:1—24:27)
 - (B) Shattering false securities (Ezek 12:1—19:14)
 - (f) Sixth false security: position as God's vine (15:1-8)

Ezekiel 15

The next three chapters (Ezek 15-17) present either a parable or an allegory, which serve the purpose of illustrating that there was no hope for Judah. Essentially, they reinforce the prophecies conveyed in Ezek 14.

(f) Sixth false security: position as God's vine (15:1-8)

- 1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
 - 1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
 - 1 This message came to me from the LORD:
 - 1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
 - The series of prophecies that God gave to Ezekiel continue (began in Ezek 12)...
- 2 "Son of man, how is the wood of the vine *better* than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest?
 - 2 "Son of man, how is the wood of the vine *better* than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest?
 - 2 "Son of Man, how does wood from a vine compare to a branch taken from any of the trees in the forest?
 - 2 Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?
 - "...vine" - *ets haggefen*, refers to a wood vine, not a cultivated vine
 - This forest tree is stunted in growth when it is overshadowed by other plants. After receiving minimal sunlight, it fails to produce any fruit, and thus becomes useless.
 - The "vine-tree" allegory is more commonly used in Scripture than even the fig tree (Cf. Deut 32:32; Ps 80:8-16; Hosea 10:1)
- 3 Can wood be taken from it to make anything, or can even a **peg** be taken from it on which to hang any utensil?

3 Can wood be taken from it to make anything, or can *men* take a peg from it on which to hang any vessel?

3 Is wood ever taken from it to make anything practical? Can it even be made into a peg to hang something on?

3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?

- The wood from this plant is unsuitable for any constructive purpose. It's not strong enough to make anything useful from it—not even a small peg.

- "...peg" - *yathed*, a long wooden peg that was typically fixed in the center post of a tent to hang valuables on (Cf. Is 22:23-25)

— Thus, the wood from this vine proves utterly useless, unfit for even the most basic functions

4 If it has been put into the fire for fuel, *and* the fire has consumed **both of its ends** and its middle part has been charred, is it *then* good for anything?

4 If it has been put into the fire for fuel, *and* the fire has consumed both of its ends and its middle part has been charred, is it *then* useful for anything?

4 After all, it's useful only for kindling a fire, isn't it? And once you've burnt up the ends and charred through the middle of it, is it useful for anything else?

4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

- The only suitable use for the wood of this vine is to be burned as fuel for a fire

- "...both of its ends" - the first two deportations had already devastated the two ends of Israel's society (the "peg"), and the impending third deportation would destroy what little is left of the wood ("its middle part")

5 Behold, while it is intact, it is not made into anything. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it still be made into anything!

5 Behold, while it is intact, it is not made into anything. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it still be made into anything!

5 If it was useless before it was burned, now that it's been burned and charred through, it's even more useless!

5 Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?

- When the peg was whole, it was useless for any practical purpose. Now that the flames have consumed it, how much less value does it hold?

— The answer to this rhetorical question is: None! The peg is just as useless after it was burned than it was before it was burned, demonstrating the total useless and purposeless

existence of Judah in her current spiritual state.

6 **Therefore**, this is what the Lord GOD says: 'As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

6 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

6 Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: "Just as the wood from a grape vine is removed from the forest and used for kindling fires, I'm giving the inhabitants of Jerusalem over

6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- "Therefore" - *lākēn*, unlike many occurrences of "therefore," here the word does not indicate consequence as it does usually, but is rather a "conversation director" reminding the audience that a discussion is in progress

— This word may be better translated as "Assuredly," "So," or "Thus"

- This verse clarifies that the "vine-tree" (v1) is Judah

7 and I set My face against them. **Though they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them.** Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I set My face against them.

7 and I set My face against them. *Though* they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them. Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I set My face against them.

7 to punishment. They may have escaped one fire, but the coming fire will burn them up completely, and they will know that I am the LORD, when I set myself in opposition to them

7 And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.

- "...they have come out" - those exiled in the first and second deportations

- "...the fire" - the impending judgment at the hands of the Babylonians

- "...the fire will consume them" - while the Babylonians had thus far left Jerusalem unscathed, the impending third attack would bring about the destruction of the city by fire

8 So I will make the land desolate, because they have acted unfaithfully," declares the Lord GOD.

8 Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have acted unfaithfully," declares the Lord GOD.

8 and dedicate the land to desolation because of their unfaithful unbelief," declares the Lord GOD.

8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.

- The effect of God's judgment on the land will leave it desolate. The cause of this desolation will be because the people "acted unfaithfully" (they violated the Mosaic Law), particularly in the area of idolatry.

Summary: The Parable of the Vine illustrates that God's judgment on Judah/Jerusalem was inevitable, and Jerusalem would be completely destroyed. The city was destined for fire because idolatry had rendered it useless.